

Message Text

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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 DUBLIN 01568

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SUBJECT: EDITORIALS IN DUBLIN DAILIES MAY 17, 1978

FOLLOWING EDITORIALS APPEARED IN DUBLIN DAILIES
MAY 17, 1978 ON THE SUBJECT OF SALE OF ARMS:

THE IRISH TIMES - VOTING FOR PEACE

PRESIDENT CARTER HAS NOTCHED UP A RARE CONGRESSIONAL
VICTORY BY PERSUADING THE US SENATE TO ACCEPT HIS
CONTROVERSIAL PACKAGE DEAL FOR THE SALE OF A
SPECIFIED NUMBER OF MILITARY AIRCRAFT TO SAUDI ARABIA,
EGYPT AND ISRAEL. THE SENATE'S ACTION, HE SAID
YESTERDAY, REAFFIRMED THE US COMMITMENT TO ISRAEL,
AND STRENGTHENED AMERICAN LINKS WITH "MODERATE"
ARAB COUNTRIES; HIS GOVERNMENT'S EFFORTS AT PEACE-
MAKING IN THE MIDDLE EAST COULD NOW BE INTENSIFIED.

THE ISRAELIS, HOWEVER, MAKE NO SECRET OF THEIR
DISMAY AT THE SENATE'S DECISION. IT MARKS THE FIRST
SERIOUS DEFEAT OF THE POWERFUL ISRAELI LOBBY
IN WASHINGTON, AND IN THE WORDS OF PRESIDENT SADAT
OF EGYPT, IS THE FIRST TIME THE ARAB WORLD HAD
"SURMOUNTED THE SPECIAL RELATIONS" BETWEEN ISRAEL
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AND THE UNITED STATES. THE ISRAELI PRIME MINISTER
HAS REACTED BY CLAIMING THAT THE LEGITIMISING OF
THE SALE VIOLATED PROMISES MADE TO HIS COUNTRY IN
THE PAST, AND ITS CONSEQUENCES REPRESENTED A THREAT
TO NATIONAL SECURITY.

MR. CARTER MUST HAVE KNOWN, OF COURSE, THAT

ISRAEL'S CRITICISM WOULD BE SEVERE. IN ADDITION, THERE IS EVIDENCE THAT INFLUENTIAL MEMBERS OF HIS OWN PARTY (THE DEMOCRATS) ARE UNHAPPY AT THE DEAL, WHICH MAY INDEED INCREASE HIS PROBLEMS IN WORKING WITH CONGRESS. WHATEVER HE DID IN THIS MATTER, HE WOULD HAVE STIRRED UP TROUBLE SOMEWHERE. IF HE HAD TURNED DOWN THE SAUDI ARABIAN AND EGYPTIAN REQUESTS FOR AEROPLANES, AND HAD SUPPLIED ISRAEL ONLY, HE WOULD HAVE BEEN IN DANGER OF SABOTAGING THE ARAB END OF THE PEACE INITIATIVE IN THE MIDDLE EAST.

THE MOST REALISTIC COMMENT FROM THE AMERICAN SIDE WAS MADE BY SENATOR RIBICOTT, WHO HAS BEEN A CONSISTENT SUPPORTER OF ISRAEL SINCE IT WAS FOUNDED. "A STRONG AND SECURE ISRAEL IS IN OUR NATIONAL INTEREST," HE ARGUED, "BUT A STRONG UNITED STATES, MILITARILY, ECONOMICALLY AND DIPLOMATICALLY, IS ALSO IN ISRAEL'S INTEREST." SAUDI ARABIA, HE WENT ON, WAS CENTRAL TO THE SEARCH FOR PEACE, AS A GREAT MORAL AND ECONOMIC FORCE IN THE ISLAMIC ARAB WORLD. THE IMPORTANCE OF ARAB OIL TO THE ECONOMIES OF THE WEST, AND OF THE SAUDI DOLLAR TO THE INTERNATIONAL MONETARY SYSTEM, CANNOT BE IGNORED.

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ISRAELI ANXIETY OVER THE PROVISIONS OF NEW AND SOPHISTICATED WEAPONRY TO ANY ARAB COUNTRY IS UNDERSTANDABLE - AS IS SCEPTICISM OVER THE LONG-TERM VALUE OF UNDERTAKINGS BY THE RECIPIENTS TO USE SUCH ARMS IN DEFENCE ONLY; GOVERNMENTS CAN CHANGE AND FALL. BUT MR. CARTER HAS MADE A BRAVE EFFORT, NOT TO CHANGE AMERICAN POLICY TOWARDS ISRAEL, BUT TO ADAPT IT WITHIN THE CONTEXT OF A PEACE INITIATIVE TO WHICH WASHINGTON IS STILL COMMITTED. THE SENATE VOTE COULD BE RESPONSIBLE FOR BREAKING THE LOG-JAM.

IRISH INDEPENDENT - ARMS DEALS

TWO DECISIONS ON THE SUPPLY OF AMERICAN ARMS ABROAD ARE LIKELY TO RAISE CONTROVERSY IN DIFFERENT PARTS OF THE WORLD, AND MAY END UP BY CAUSING MORE TROUBLE THAN THEY ARE WORTH.

THE FIRST DECISION WILL SEND AMERICAN PLANES TO SAUDI ARABIA, EGYPT - AND ISRAEL. THE ARABS CLAIM -

AND THEIR CLAIM HAS NOW BEEN ACCEPTED - THAT THEY
NEED THE PLANES FOR SELF-DEFENCE. IN ADDITION THE
SAUDIS HINTED THAT NON-DELIVERY OF THE PLANES COULD
RESULT IN AN INTERFERENCE WITH OIL SUPPLIES TO
THE U.S. WHATEVER THE MOTIVES BEHIND THE AMERICAN
DECISION THE ARABS ARE NOW TO GET THE PLANES, AND
THE ISRAELIS, THOUGH RECEIVING SOME OF THE SAME, ARE
NOT HAPPY ABOUT THE DEVELOPMENT. GONE ARE THE DAYS
WHEN THEY COULD DEPEND ON THE AMERICANS TO TO
SUPPLY THE ARABS WITH ANYTHING THAT MIGHT THREATEN

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ISRAEL.

A SECOND DECISION COULD HAVE EVEN MORE DRASTIC
CONSEQUENCES. FOR THE AMERICANS HAVE VOTED
AGAINST RESUMING ARMS SUPPLIES TO TURKEY WHICH
WERE HALTED WHEN THAT COUNTRY INVADED AND TOOK OVER
PART OF CYPRUS IN RESPONSE TO DEVELOPMENTS THERE
WHICH, ANKARA FELT, THREATENED THE TURKISH-
CYPRIOT COMMUNITY.

THE TURKS AT THE TIME THREW OUT SOME AMERICANS
BUT SINCE THEN HAVE LOBBIED STRONGLY TO HAVE THE
ARMS FLOW RESUMED, WITHOUT SUCCESS. DURING THAT
TIME THEIR ARMY, ONCE ONE OF THE BEST IN EUROPE,
HAS BEEN WEAKENED AND SOME OBSERVERS CLAIM IT IS
ONLY HALF THE FORCE IT ONCE WAS. SINCE TURKEY IS
A VITAL LINK IN THE NATO SET-UP THIS DETERIORATION
HAS WORRIED THOSE PEOPLE CONCERNED WITH THE
DEFENCE OF EUROPE.

WHILE OTHER COUNTRIES MAY COME TO TURKEY'S AID
NONE OF THEM IS LIKELY TO BE ABLE O SUPPLY THE
KIND OF HARDWARE THE TURKS WANT, LEAVING THE DOOR
OPEN, THEREFORE, TO POSSIBLE SOVIET INFLUENCE.
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IN SHORT THE AMERICANS HAVE NOT WON MANY FRIENDS IN
THIS ROUND OF ARMS DEALING, AND THEY CERTAINLY HAVE
NOT MADE CLEAR THE BASIS OF THEIR FOREIGN POLICIES.
PERHAPS THERE IS NONE; THE SIGNS OF "AD HOCERY"
ARE VERY OBVIOUS. KRENE

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